

there were three of us then
only two now
before we were chased by the railroad
guard i lied you ran and the last one
you stayed
and gave your name
now there are two
the rocks we threw til arms dead numb

now there are two separated by a state
you along the steaming river
me staring at a lake
just travelled land between
and living tissue
til later this land not joined
there will be none
can we get past what is coming i don't
know except the crashing train nighthurling
beneath us scared shitless on a quivering
platform or throwing rocks
smash the coal cars lancing the night
with sparks
later to each place separate

whistles lurching the night toward

dawn

-- Kent Taylor

Lakewood, Ohio

Green

Yes, that was it because
of the August heat we went
into a closed place and made
(by parting briefly
and each pulling down in unison
with the other a green
windowshade) deep green darkness
in which we met, and were naked,
and lay together on the bed
with hungry
green bodies.

though this may not be it

In Marseilles I
wore my black trenchcoat
into the lingerie shop: I had
removed the bars from my shoulders:
outside it was darkening chilly pre-
Christmas:

an afternoon
near an ocean
(I call that sea an
ocean):
the wife of someone was buying
a strapless bra imprinted
with blue and violet flowers:

my presence made her blush: she
nodded at the saleslady and paid
hurriedly: a plain pretty blushing
not young not old woman
buying something nice
for herself:

that's when I bought
you the lace slip the crazy costly
all-lace slip
the display had poignantly dressed you in
across those miles:

the really great young love
poem (I am certain)
must somehow involve such a pure
and white and luxurious
undergarment:

and such a self-conscious
plain pretty woman who wants for herself
something personal and nice:

and though this may not be it such
a poem must involve miles and miles
of distance, preferably
across dark, cold waters,

and it must suggest
a most incredible and hungry
loneliness,

the kind of ache in the chest
oceans and fine workmanship
and lovely women and
inaccessibility inevitably
precipitate.

-- Hale Chatfield

Chardon, Ohio

the eucalyptus

last night i finally saw
a eucalyptus plant.
i keep running across them
in other people's poems
and you'd think they would be
familiar by now.
but there it was in a
vase someone had tipped over,
spilling water all across the
carpet.
when she said
Watch out for the eucalyptus
my palms began to sweat.
it isn't often that poems
become alive,
and there was one being
green and touchable.
that i lay in a corner
fondling it for the rest
of the night
should be obvious.

what an ache can do

55 years old and
his back aches
so now he wants a son.
i'd hung around for years
being punished with gifts
i didn't want:
good roofs, piano lessons.
when i was small it
wasn't too bad.
he'd just want a kiss
every now and then
and if i could do it
for ladies who pinched my
cheek in the park
i could do it for him.